which used to bring down the house in " Louis XL" and in "Richelieu," but which were really the *easy* things in acting, and in " Richelieu " (in my opinion) not especially well done. In " Hamlet " Henry Irving did not go to the audience. He made them come to him. Slowly but surely attention gave place to admiration, admiration to enthusiasm, enthusiasm to triumphant acclaim.

I have seen many Hamlets—Fechter, Charles Kean, Rossi, Frederick Haas, Forbes Robertson, and my own son, Gordon Craig, among them, but they were not in the same hemisphere 1 I refuse to go and see Hamlets now. I want to keep Henry living's fresh and clear in my memory until I die. - . .'

When he engaged me to play Ophelia in 1878 he asked me to go down to Birmingham to see the play, and that night I saw what I shall always consider the *perfection* of acting. It had been woncLerful in 1874. In 1878 it was far more wonderful-. - It has been said that when he had the " advantage" of my Ophelia, his Hamlet " improved.*[1]

I don't think so. He was always quite independent of the people with whom he acted.

The Birmingham night he knew I was there. He played —I say it without vanity—for me. We players are not above that weakness, if it be a weakness. If ever anything inspires us to do our best it is the presence in the audience of some fellow-artist who must in the nature of things know more completely than any one what we intend, what we do, what we feel. The response from such a member of the

audience flies across the footlights to us like a flame. I felt it once when I played Olivia before Eleonora Duse. I felt that she felt it once when she played Marguerite Gauthier for me.

When I read " Hamlet" now, everything that Henry did in it seems to me more absolutely right, even than I thought